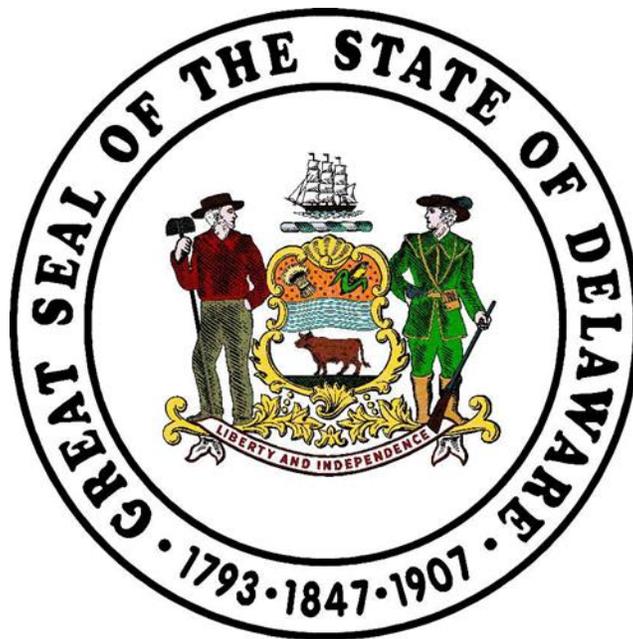


Crime in Delaware 2017 – 2021 Executive Brief



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Statistical Analysis Center
Delaware Criminal Justice Council
In Conjunction with the
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Crime in Delaware: 2017 – 2021

Executive Brief

An Analysis of Serious Crime in Delaware

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The points of view expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official position of the United States Department of Justice.

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Please visit our website at <http://sac.delaware.gov/>

Crime in Delaware 2017 – 2021

Executive Brief

This executive brief provides an overview of the findings presented in the full report, *Crime in Delaware 2017 – 2021*. *Crime in Delaware* is the official report of serious crime known to Delaware law enforcement agencies. This report covers data about serious crimes reported to state, county, and local police agencies for the years 2017 through 2021. Serious crimes for the purpose of this report are those the Federal Bureau of Investigation identifies as “Group A Offenses” in the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The “Group A Offenses” are those more serious/significant crimes such as Murder, Rape, Robbery, Theft, etc. Other “Group B” Offenses, which are not covered in this report, tend to be more minor in nature, such as Curfew/Vagrancy violations, Disorderly Conduct, and “Other” minor offenses.

Crime in Delaware provides information for 24 Violent, Serious Property, Drug/Narcotic and Other Property and Social offenses reported in Delaware’s implementation of NIBRS operated by the State Bureau of Identification of the Delaware State Police. Additional years of data are included in specific graphs to illustrate long term trends.

The full *Crime in Delaware 2017 – 2021* report contains extensive data and is available on the Statistical Analysis Center’s website (<http://sac.delaware.gov/>).

Detailed, jurisdiction level offense data can be viewed and downloaded from the Delaware Open Data Portal.

<https://data.delaware.gov/Public-Safety/State-of-Delaware-NIBRS-Crime-Report-Totals-by-Jur/8njr-fz7r>

Note: Caution should be used when comparing criminal offense trends involving 2020/2021 totals. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent State of Emergency declarations, court closings, and travel restrictions within the State of Delaware, it is not possible to discern if, or how much, those events impacted year-to-year changes in offense totals.

Note: During NIBRS data research in early 2022 it was found that Identity Theft and Hacking/Computer Invasion offense totals were not being calculated correctly in the reporting used to create the *Crime in Delaware* reports. While overall Fraud offense totals were calculated correctly, the individual sub-category totals changed drastically for the 2021 totals.

Key Findings/Trends

The full *Crime in Delaware 2017 – 2021* report contains extensive data and statistics on serious offenses, clearances, adult and juvenile arrests, and crimes against law enforcement officers. This report includes a summary of this data at the state and county levels, followed by a more detailed breakdown based on five major topic areas: 1) Violent Offenses, 2) Serious Property Offenses, 3) Drug/Narcotic Offenses, 4) Other Property and Social Offenses, and 5) Crimes Against Law Enforcement Officers. The data for each topic area is organized by state and county. Below are key findings from this extensive set of Delaware crime data.

Serious Offenses

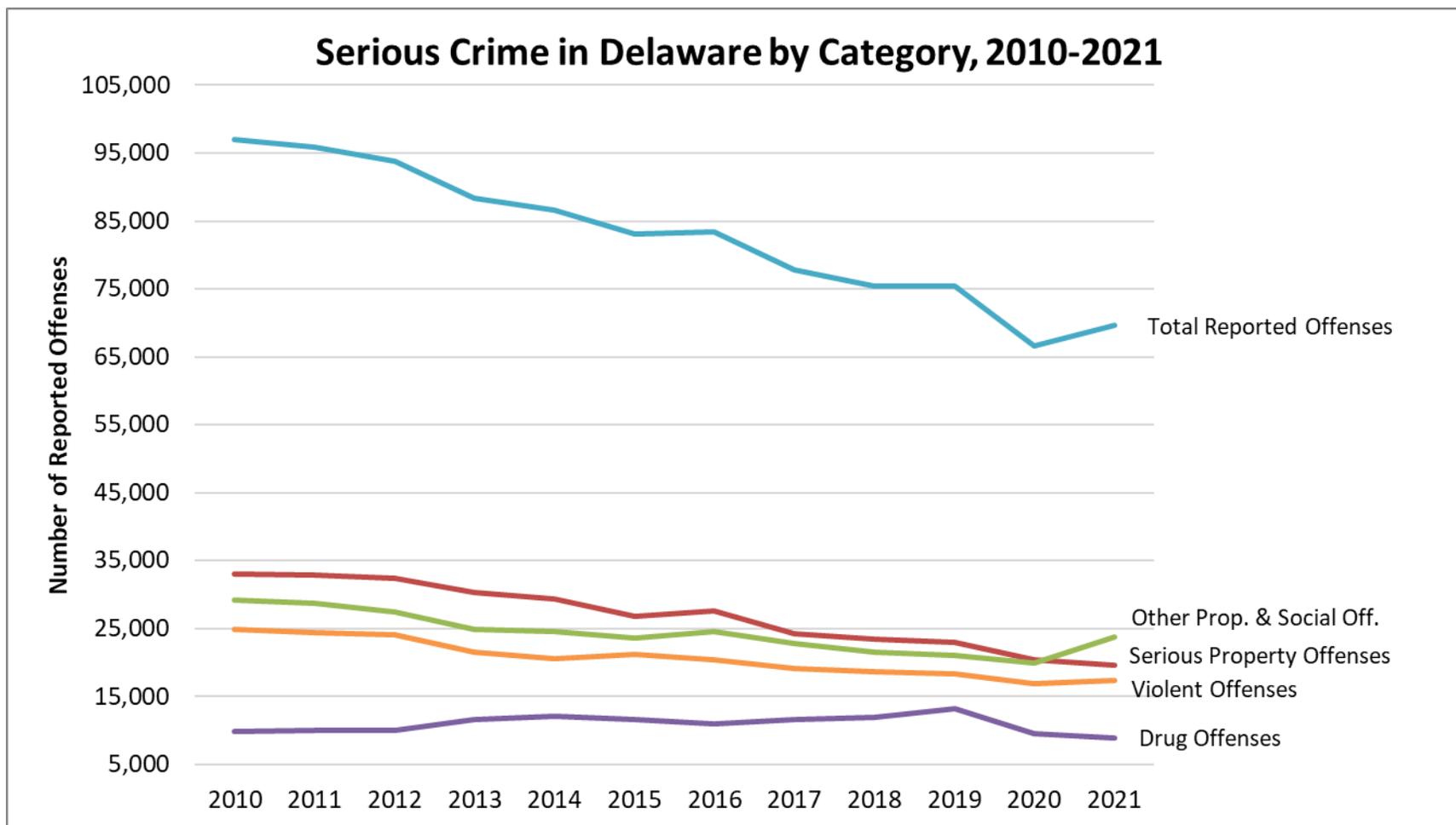
- **Overall, across the state, reported serious crime has decreased over 10% since 2017.** The number of serious criminal offenses known to police in 2017 was 77,734 compared with 69,595 in 2021, a decrease of over 10% (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1). After a widespread drop in 2020, Violent and Other Property offenses rose from 2020 to 2021. Offense trends by County are presented at the end of this brief. (Figures E4-E6)
 - In New Castle County, the number of total offenses decreased by almost 10% from 2017 to 2021. New Castle County accounts for 51% of the overall Statewide reported offenses.
 - For Kent County, total offenses in 2021 compared to 2017 decreased over 7%. Kent County accounts for 15% of the overall Statewide reported offenses.
 - In Sussex County, total offenses in 2021 compared to 2017 decreased almost 15%. Sussex County accounts for 34% of the overall Statewide reported offenses.
- **Statewide violent crime is lower overall.** The number of Violent Offenses reported decreased over 9% from 2017 to 2021 (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
 - In New Castle County, Violent Offenses were over 16% lower when compared to 2017 while Sussex County saw a 2% decline.
 - Kent County saw a less than 1% increase in Violent Offenses from 2017 to 2021.
- **There were 107 statewide homicides in 2021 which is a high since this reporting began in 2002 (95 Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter, 12 Negligent Manslaughter).**
 - There were 76 homicides in New Castle County in 2021, a high since the beginning of this reporting in 2002.
 - Kent County had 19 homicides in 2020, also a report high.
 - Sussex County experienced 12 homicides in 2020, just under the report high.

Note: In 2019 the FBI began including Vehicular Homicides under the Criminally Negligent Manslaughter category. Those offenses were not previously included in the NIBRS Homicide summary totals. This change included 11 Negligent Manslaughter offenses in the 2021 totals (4 in New Castle County, 3 in Kent County, and 4 in Sussex County).

Table E-1: Delaware Statewide Serious Crime Summary, 2017 – 2021

Serious Offenses Reported, 2017 – 2021						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Violent Offenses	19,115	18,684	18,306	16,936	17,333	
Serious Property Offenses	24,298	23,420	22,872	20,315	19,607	
Drug Offenses	11,545	11,940	13,195	9,476	8,942	
Other Property, Social Offenses	22,776	21,440	20,975	19,840	23,713	
Total Offenses Reported	77,734	75,484	75,348	66,567	69,595	
Percent Difference in Serious Offenses Reported						
	17 - 18	18 - 19	19 - 20	20 - 21	17 – 21	Average 17-20 vs 21
Violent Offenses	-2.3%	-2.0%	-7.5%	2.3%	-9.3%	-5.1%
Serious Property Offenses	-3.6%	-2.3%	-11.2%	-3.5%	-19.3%	-10.6%
Drug Offenses	3.4%	10.5%	-28.2%	-5.6%	-22.5%	-17.9%
Other Property, Social Offenses	-5.9%	-2.2%	-5.4%	19.5%	4.1%	-6.7%
Total Offenses Reported	-2.9%	-0.2%	-11.7%	4.5%	-10.5%	-9.8%

Figure E-1: Serious Crime in Delaware by Category, 2010 – 2021



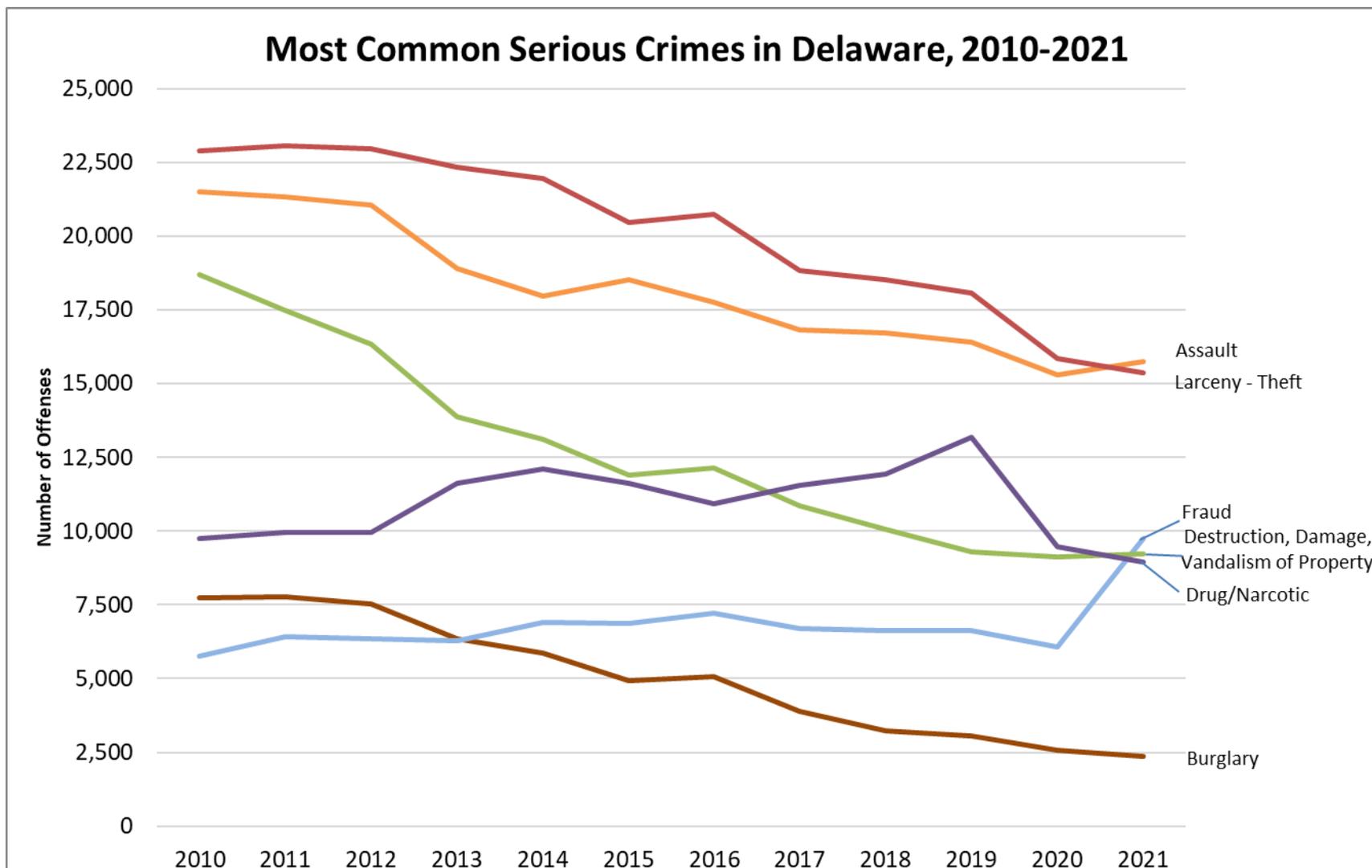
- **The crime rate is lower.** The Statewide Crime Rate decreased from 80.3 offenses per 1,000 persons in 2017 to 69.7 in 2021. This change in the Crime Rate reflects just over a 10% decrease in the number of offenses and a 3% increase in Delaware’s population.
- **Serious property crime is down.** The number of reported Serious Property Offenses decreased over 19% from 2017 to 2021. This category of offenses has been on an overall decline since 2016. Burglary offenses decreased 39% from 2017 to 2021. (See Table E-1 and Figure E-1)
 - In New Castle County, the number of Serious Property Offenses in 2021 was almost 16% lower compared to 2017. Burglary has decreased 29% from 2017. Larceny decreased 16% from 2017.
 - Kent County saw more than an 18% decrease from 2017 to 2021. Burglary has decreased 44% since 2017 which mirrors the overall state trend. Larceny offenses decreased over 17% over the same period.
 - Sussex County saw an almost 30% decrease from 2017 to 2021. Burglary has dropped almost 55% since 2017, which is the largest percentage decrease of the three counties. Larceny has decreased 25%.
- **Overall Drug/Narcotic Offenses decreased almost 23% from 2017.** Drug/Narcotic Possession Offenses have decreased 23% over this period, while Drug Equipment Offenses decreased 21%. (See Table E-1 and Figure E-1)
 - In New Castle County, from 2017 to 2022 Possession Offenses decreased almost 26% and Drug Equipment offenses decreased almost 40%.
 - In Kent, there was an almost 14% decrease in Possession Offenses from 2017 to 2021. Drug Equipment Offenses were down 14%.
 - Sussex County Possession Offenses down 26% from 2017. Drug Equipment Offenses are down almost 14%.

Note: In December 2015, Delaware passed legislation that decriminalized certain Marijuana Possession Offenses. Depending on various circumstances, these offenses are civil offenses. Due to the Federal Government still recording these offenses as criminal, they are part of the Drug Offense totals in this report.

- **More Other Property and Social Offenses were reported from 2017 to 2021.** From 2017 to 2021, there was a 4% increase in these offenses (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1). Weapon Law Violations saw a 5% increase. Stolen Property Offenses were 39% lower.
 - Between 2017 and 2021, New Castle and Kent Counties experienced increases in Other Property and Social Offenses of 10% and 1%, respectively. Sussex County decreased almost 7%.
 - Property Destruction/Vandalism Offenses have decreased 14% in New Castle, 10% in Kent, and 23% in Sussex.
 - Statewide, Fraud saw an almost 46% increase from 2017 to 2021. It had been on a decline, but there was a 60% increase from 2020 to 2021.

- **The trends for firearm-related offenses from 2017 to 2021 were mixed.** Weapons Law Violations (2,235 in 2021) were 5% higher compared to 2017 totals and have been climbing since 2018. Robberies with a Firearm (242 offenses in 2021) decreased 59% from 2017. This significant decline flattened from 2019 to 2020, then continued to decline in 2021. Assaults with a Firearm (1,395 in 2021) have increased 37% since 2017 but did show a small decline from 2020 to 2021 (9%).
 - In New Castle County, offenses of Robbery with a Firearm are down 60% since 2017. Assault with a Firearm Offenses have increased 27% overall since 2017 but declined 13% from 2020 to 2021.
 - In Kent County, offenses of Robbery with a Firearm have shown a 63% decrease from 2017, part of a steady decline. Assault with a Firearm Offenses have increased almost 37% from 2017 totals but did show a 15% decline from 2020 to 2021.
 - In Sussex County, offenses of Robbery with a Firearm are down almost 42% compared with 2017 totals. Assault with a Firearm Offenses have increased almost 97% since 2017 (119 offenses to 234 offenses).

Figure E-2: Most Common Serious Crimes in Delaware, 2010 – 2021



Clearances

For crime reporting and analysis purposes, an offense is considered cleared when a suspect is either arrested and subsequently referred for prosecution or cannot be arrested but is otherwise clearly identifiable.

- **Based on 2021 data, offenses in all crime categories were cleared at rates comparable to prior reporting periods** (see Figure E-3). Overall, all crime categories had clearance rates at or near those of previous years, while just under half of the offenses (47.5%) in 2021 were cleared by the end of the calendar year. Drug and Violent Offenses continue to be cleared at high rates (94.5% and 74.0% respectively). Serious Property Offenses and Other Property and Social Offenses were cleared at rates of 24.2% and 29.7% respectively.
 - In New Castle County, 39.4% of all 2021 offenses were cleared, with the highest rates for Drug/Narcotic Offenses (92.1%) and Violent Offenses (68.1%).
 - In Kent County, 56.5% of 2021 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (96.6%) and Violent Offenses (78.0%) being cleared at the highest rates.
 - In Sussex County, 58.5% of all 2021 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (95.9%) and Violent Offenses (81.8%) having the highest rates.

Arrests

- The number of arrests in 2021 decreased almost 22% compared to 2017 with just over a 10% decrease in the number of reported offenses over the same period. Declines occurred across all main offense categories (see Table E-2 and Figure E-3). The most notable decreases were for Serious Property Offenses (42.1% since 2017) and Other Property and Social Offenses (27.6%). Juvenile arrests were lower across all crime categories during this period (a 47.7% decrease overall). Total adult arrests were 18% lower with all categories showing decreases. Arrest trends by county are located at the end of this report (Figures E4-E6).
 - In New Castle County, total arrests were 20.5% lower compared to 2017. Overall, juvenile arrests were 42.7% lower in 2021, with decreases in arrests for all categories. Juvenile Drug arrests were almost 66% lower. Total adult arrests were 17.4% lower with all categories decreasing.
 - In Kent County, the number of total arrests was almost 22.8% lower, with decreases among all four categories. Overall, juvenile arrests were 56.9% lower than in 2017, with a decrease in all categories. Adult arrests were 18.9% lower, with decreases in all categories.
 - In Sussex County, arrests were 22.3% lower than in 2017 with decreases in all categories. Overall, juvenile arrests were 51% lower than in 2017 overall, with decreases in all categories. The number of total adult arrests was down 19.1%. Adult arrests saw decreases in all categories.

Table E-2: Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses, 2017 – 2021

Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Arrests	23,739	21,695	22,456	18,715	18,641
Violent Offenses	8,591	8,493	8,699	7,616	7,706
Serious Property Offenses	6,201	5,338	5,508	4,235	3,588
Drug Offenses	4,928	4,513	4,807	4,141	4,437
Other Property and Social Offenses	4,019	3,351	3,442	2,723	2,910
Total Adult Arrests					
Total Adult Arrests	21,103	19,416	20,078	17,206	17,262
Violent Offenses	7,356	7,364	7,502	6,911	6,969
Serious Property Offenses	5,530	4,793	4,945	3,840	3,329
Drug Offenses	4,577	4,225	4,541	4,039	4,318
Other Property and Social Offenses	3,640	3,034	3,090	2,416	2,646
Total Juvenile Arrests					
Total Juvenile Arrests	2,636	2,279	2,378	1,509	1,379
Violent Offenses	1,235	1,129	1,197	705	737
Serious Property Offenses	671	545	563	395	259
Drug Offenses	351	288	266	102	119
Other Property and Social Offenses	379	317	352	307	264

Figure E-3: All Delaware Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2010 – 2021

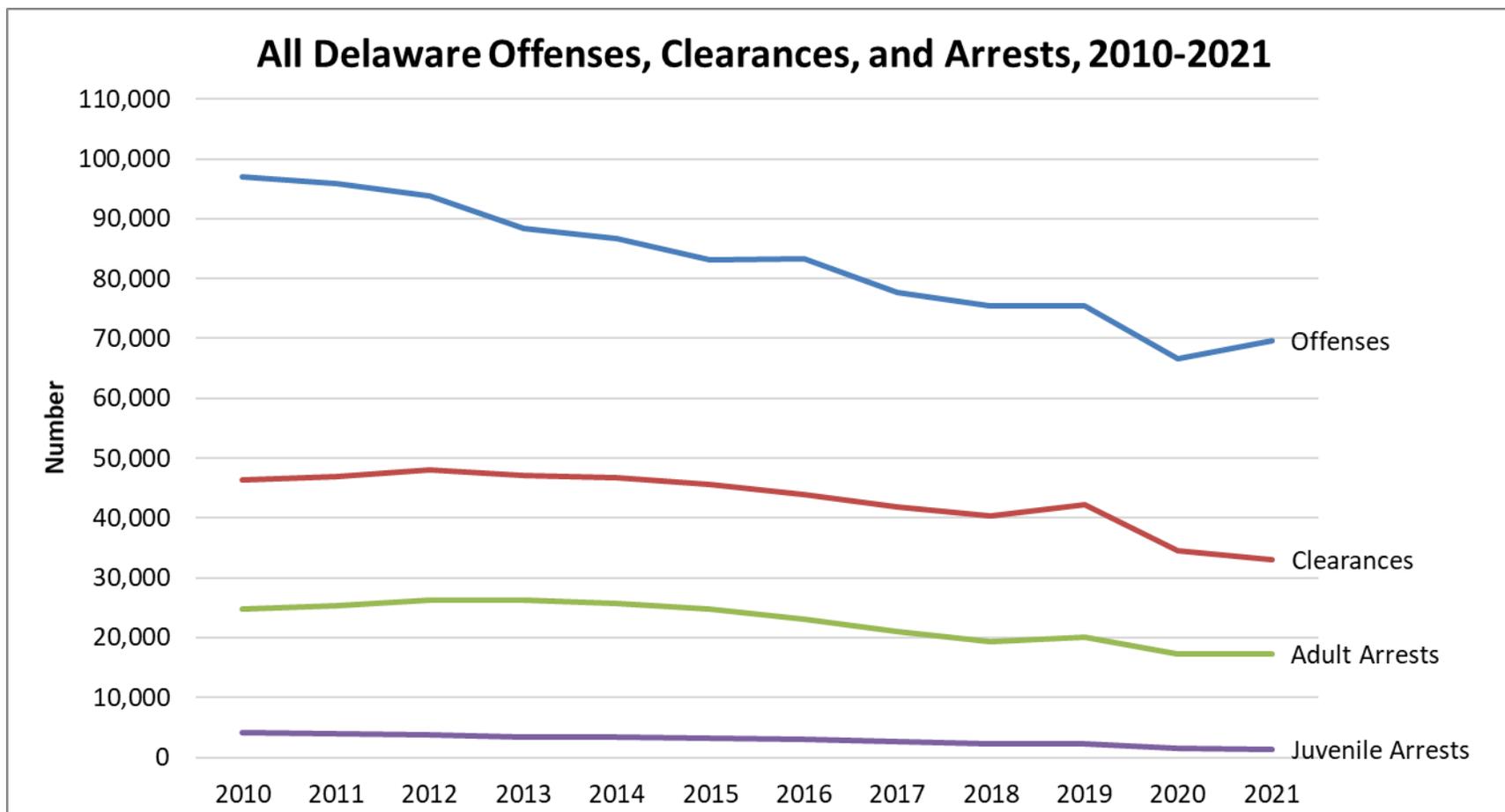


Figure E4: All New Castle County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2010 -2021

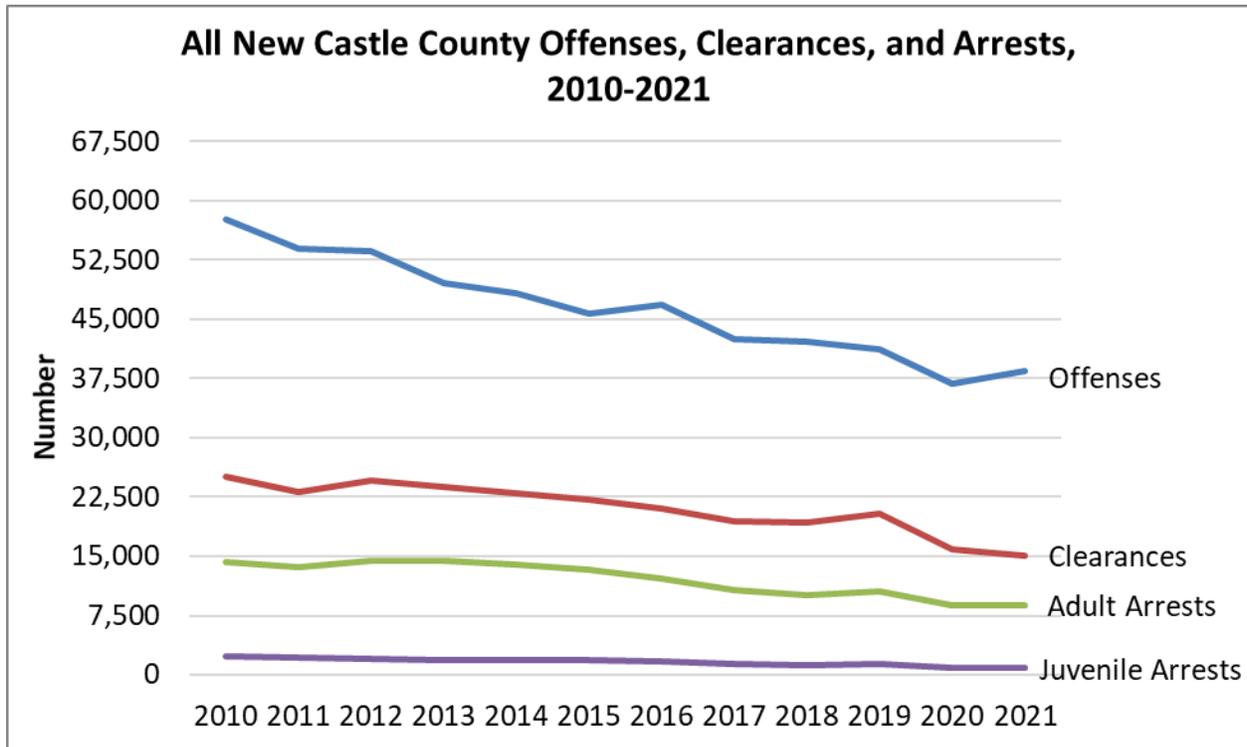


Figure E5: All Kent County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2010-2021

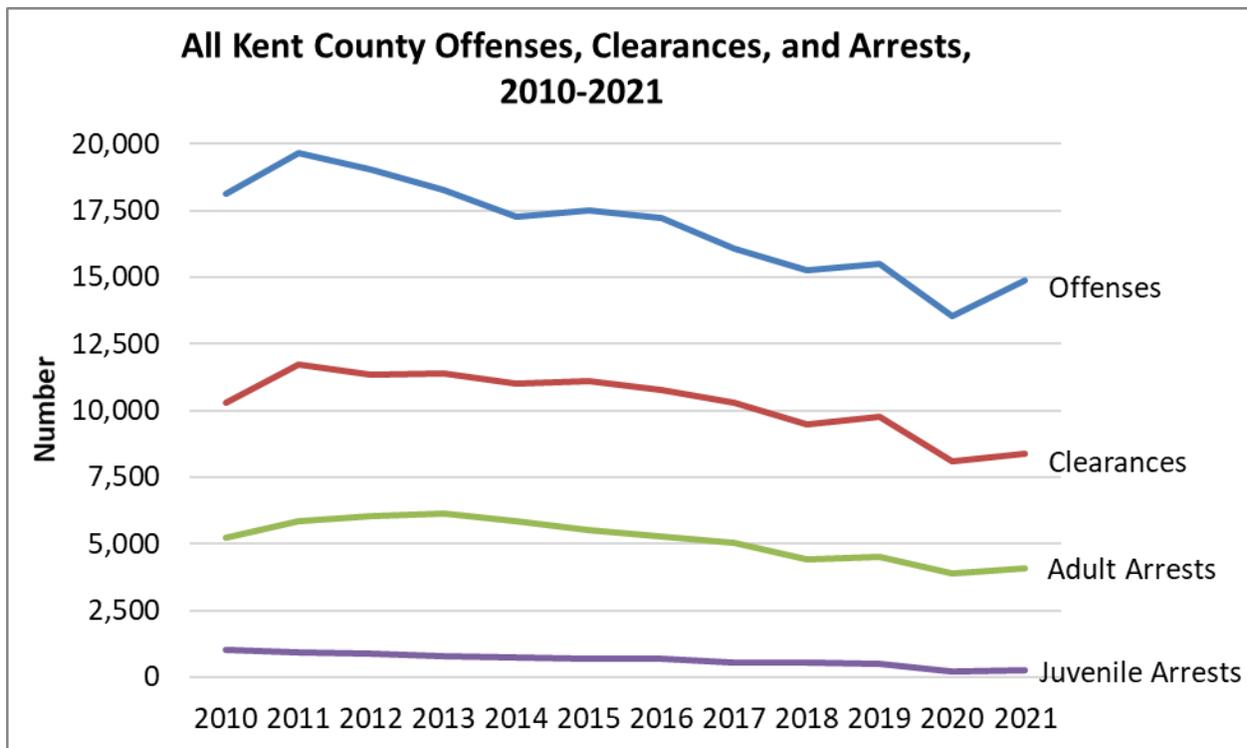
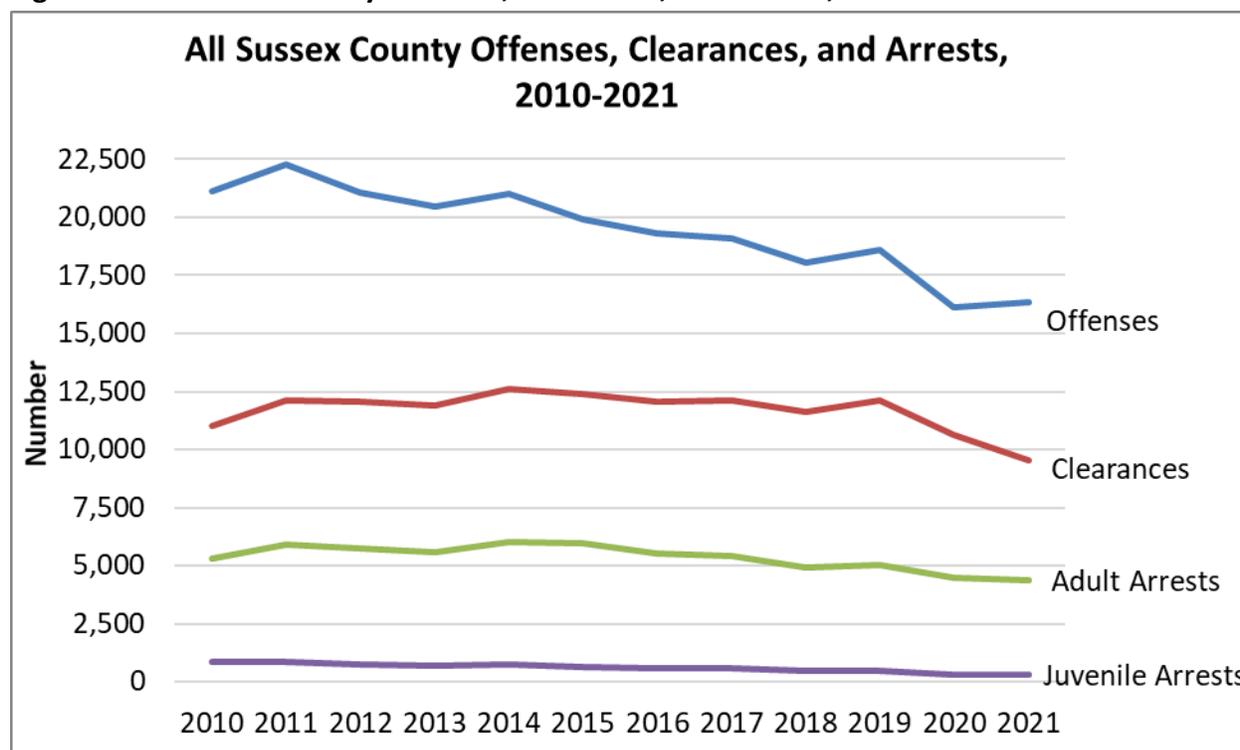


Figure E6: All Sussex County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2010 – 2021



Violent Crime Against Law Enforcement Officers

- ***In 2021, 442 assault-related offenses were committed against law enforcement officers, about 8% higher when compared to 2017.*** Almost all offenses (93%) were cleared before the end of 2021. Assaults against officers continue to be cleared at rates near or above 93%.
 - In New Castle County, there were 241 Assault Offenses against officers in 2021, up 3% from 2017. 22% of assaults against officers in 2021 resulted in injury.
 - In Kent County, assaults on officers (84) were 2% lower than 2017, but an increase from a report low in 2020 (53). Almost 17% of assaults resulted in injuries in Kent County.
 - Sussex County assaults on officers (117) were up 27% from 2017 while 34% of those assaults led to an injury. This is a report period high.

Most assault-related offenses occurred while responding to disturbances, attempting an arrest, and handling prisoners. Responding to a disturbance, attempting an arrest, and handling prisoners accounted for 63% of assaults against officers in 2021. These activities have accounted for 60-70% of assaults during the 2017 to 2021 period. 74% of all assaults on an officer were from the subject using their hands, fists, or feet. Although firearms were not often used to injure a law enforcement officer (4%), they increased slightly from the past three years. The period high of firearm usage in 2017 (6.6%) may be influenced by one incident in 2017 that accounted for many assaults.

One officer was killed in 2021 and just over 24% of assault-related offenses resulted in injuries. Overall, three officers were killed in the line of duty during the 2017 through 2021 period. The percentage of assault-related offenses in 2021 that resulted in injury is comparable to past years but is a high. There were 5 attempted homicides of an officer in 2021. There were a record 24 attempted homicides of officers in 2017. Eighteen offenses were attributed to the shooting death of an officer and a subsequent stand-off where the subject fired upon multiple responding officers. In 2020, 5 attempted homicides were the result of one incident, 3 from another incident, and 2 from yet a third separate incident, with the others being single incidents.

Table E-3: Violent Offenses Committed Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers, 2017–21

Violent Offenses Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers 2017 – 2021					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Officers Assaulted	407	425	448	398	442
Officers Killed	2	0	0	0	1
Attempted Homicides on Officers	24	0	1	12	5
Assaults Resulting in Officer Injury	17.4%	16.7%	20.5%	17.1%	24.2%
Assault-related Offenses Cleared	93.6%	93.4%	94.4%	95.7%	92.8%